

Lincoln, Nebraska
September 12, 2007

JUSTICE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

The Justice Behavioral Health Committee (JBHC), formerly Justice Substance Abuse Team (JSAT) of the Community Corrections Council (Council) met Wednesday, September 12, 2007, in Classroom 1, Bryan LGH West, Lincoln, Nebraska. The meeting was open to the public and was preceded by advance publicized notice in the Lincoln Journal Star.

Members Present:

Jerome Barry, Co-Chair
Scott Carlson
Dave Carver
Cathy Gibson-Beltz
Kathleen Grant
Lori Griggs
Julie Hippen
Linda Krutz
Dennis McChargue
Rick McNeese
Terri Nutzman
Michael Overton
Nancy Probst
Steve Rowoldt, Co-Chair
Christine Salvatore
Kathy Seacrest
Lee Tyson
Dave Wegner
Linda Wittmuss

Members Absent:

John Atherton
Michael Behm
Robert Bell
Roxie Cillessen
Ellen Fabian-Brokofsky
Lee Kimzey
Randy Kohl
Joel McCleary
Mona McGee-Snyder
Deb Minardi
Bruce Prenda
T. Hank Robinson
Cameron White

Council Staff Present:

Nickette Allen
Tia Bachman

Others Present:

Brad Hicken

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Jerome Barry, Co-Chair, called the meeting to order and announced that the meeting was subject to the Nebraska Open Meetings Act. Attendance is indicated above. Linda Krutz introduced Tia Bachman as the new Administrative Assistant for the Council. Each member present introduced him or herself and gave a brief statement about their involvement.

The JBHC Members List was reviewed and corrections were noted. The updated list will be emailed to all members when completed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Members reviewed the June 13, 2007 meeting minutes. No corrections were noted. Julie Hippen moved for approval of the June 13, 2007 minutes as presented. Linda Wittmuss seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

MEMBERSHIP VACANCIES

JBHC consists of thirty-seven total Committee members. Four of the member positions are currently vacant.

Krutz stated Governor Heinemann will appoint the two vacant Council positions previously held by Catherine Cook and Scot Adams. Krutz will announce the members at a future meeting.

Hippen nominated Jeff Runnings to fill the position of Consumer. Runnings is familiar with the area of substance abuse treatment and JBHC. The motion to accept Jeff Runnings in the position of Consumer was advanced by Kathy Seacrest and seconded by Dave Carter. The motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

Margene Timm, the original Juvenile Drug Court attorney, is being considered for the Criminal Defense Attorney position. Timm currently works with the public defenders office. Lori Griggs will discuss membership with her and report back at the next meeting.

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS COUNCIL REPORT

Krutz gave the Community Corrections Council Report. Chairperson Brashear has added four meetings to address 2008 legislative issues as well as ongoing strategic planning. Krutz invited all members of JBHC to attend the Council meetings and noted they are posted on the Crime Commission website.

The Policy Analyst position is still vacant with Julie Rogers having resigned in June. This position is posted on the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) website and should be filled in the next six weeks.

The Council has approved Probation and Parole's Fee Proposals. Krutz noted the ambitious schedule for training of officers by Probation and Parole. The Department of Corrections (DCS) has submitted a data project to alleviate the issues with lack of data available to the Council, Parole, DCS, and JBHC. Krutz suggested this issue be addressed in future meetings.

Nebraska was selected to receive technical support provided by Vera Institute of Justice (Vera) from Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew) at the beginning of 2007. The Council will coordinate with Vera who will assist in developing a plan to examine how Community Corrections continues to develop in Nebraska. Vera is also contracted to complete the Probation/Parole Services Study. Members of JBHC may be contacted by Vera for information. Sara Mogulescu with Vera will provide a 3-6 page summary of the study progress by October 12, 2007. The summary will be available on the Crime Commission website.

Krutz discussed the Council's communication strategy, and presented the Council Newsletter which will go out quarterly. She mentioned the short article featuring JBHC and how JBHC fits in the purview of the Council. The Council is also working on other educational pieces that will be presented as they apply to JBHC.

The new Community Corrections Council website is due to be accessible in January 2008. Currently, all scheduled Council meeting dates are available on the Crime Commission website. The next scheduled Council meeting is Friday, October 19, 2007 at 9:00 in the Embassy Suites conference room.

Steve Rowoldt requested to be on the agenda at the next Council meeting to give a report on JBHC membership, By-Laws, and Guidelines.

PROBATION ADMINISTRATION UPDATE

Christine Salvatore gave the Probation Administration Update. The use of the voucher program is progressively growing. Salvatore noted feedback is positive from officers and providers using electronic vouchers.

The new probation officer training has been revamped, and Probation is in the process of developing and changing the training to make it more detailed for the officers. Additional weeks have been added to train officers to deal with offenders with mental health issues, substance abuse issues, domestic violence issues, and sex offenders.

Americore currently has eight volunteers in rural areas to help offenders seek out education and employment opportunities. It was noted Americore volunteers are

developing relationships in the community to help offenders transition to being productive members of their communities.

Dave Wegner discussed the Electronic Case Management System and the Probation Administration request for funding from the Council. Wegner said the request was approved for monitoring, training of staff, and the integration of the case management system for approximately 5,000 offenders by June 30, 2008. He noted officers will be spending the bulk of their time working with high risk offenders.

Rowoldt described the progress made on the Day Reporting Center (DRC) in Lincoln. DCS work release inmates worked on the third and fourth floors of Trabert Hall to prepare it for the grand opening. Space was made available for the contracting partners including the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Psychiatric Department, Goodwill, and Southeast Community College for General Education Development (GED's). Rowoldt noted all substance abuse testing was consolidated, and they will perform approximately 30,000 urinalysis tests at Trabert Hall every year. He said Probation Officers are already referring parolees to participate in cognitive groups.

Rowoldt noted 25,000 people are on probation every day in Lancaster County. He estimated 12,000 of those are low risk offenders. Two probation officers are now assigned to the high risk offenders. One will work directly with offenders and the other will supervise and provide quality control. Rowoldt discussed the grant for sex offenders and how they will utilize the DRC.

Rowoldt urged JBHC members and Community Corrections Council members to tour the Trabert Hall DRC.

PAROLE ADMINISTRATION

Cathy Gibson-Beltz gave the Parole Administration Update. During the past month Parole visited with Specialized Substance Abuse Supervision (SSAS) officers, chief probation officers, and directors of DRC's in Omaha and Lincoln concerning the number of voucher referrals. In the month of August, 30 voucher referrals were made to DRC's.

Gibson-Beltz stated approving inmates to SSAS prior to release from the facilities is a barrier for parole to overcome. She noted having a parole officer perform suitability screenings along with making an educated guess of substance abuse needs is a consideration.

Gibson-Beltz noted difficulty in accessing DCS evaluations/files on inmates. Barry asked if it would be possible to update the substance abuse evaluation on inmates so that proper level of care could be considered upon discharge from a facility. Catherine Salvatore said the evaluations that do not follow the standardized model format are unacceptable by the SSAS officers. She noted that many DCS providers are not registered, and therefore their evaluations are also not accepted by SSAS officers.

Gibson-Beltz said another difficulty faced by Parole is obtaining the release of information signed by offenders to allow access to file information by Case Managers.

Krutz discussed the need for a single form to contain information on each offender in SSAS and be accessible to all agencies involved. Gibson-Beltz stated it could be added to the form officers fill out for American Correctional Association (ACA) performance measures. Krutz noted the paradigm shift with probation and parole, and how they now have to think about what happens when offenders leave their services.

Gibson-Beltz stated the perception of DCS has been to get inmates out of prison and not necessarily about keeping them out. She noted institutional staff do not see parole or post incarceration care as DCS's issue. Gibson-Beltz said there have been changes and a Release Preparation Administrative Regulation Policy has been implemented.

Barry requested Gibson-Beltz report at the next meeting on the number or percentages of parolees who received treatment while incarcerated versus the number or percentage of parolees who will require treatment after release.

Lee Tyson discussed the State Advisory Committee on Substance Abuse point of view. She noted an overall goal is to make the transition from incarceration to the community as smooth as possible. It was noted offenders make appointments and shop around for treatment plans with the least restrictions. Gibson-Beltz is working with Case Managers on locating transitional living facilities and identifying why offenders violate parole.

Griggs said a goal would be to have the post incarceration care set up before inmates are released from prison. Gibson-Beltz stated Parole and SSAS officers discovered that if offenders are in SSAS when they are released, the likelihood of success is greater than when a plan is set up after they are released.

Kathy Grant summarized evaluation as a process, not an event and while they still use the term 'discharge summary', it is more of a transition plan. She noted that offenders move from one level of care or service to another and the plan should identify what is the next appropriate level. Barry noted the discharge summary was once called a 'termination summary', and he would like it to eventually be called a transition summary to reflect the transition of the offenders.

Probation is working with Parole to provide training on the Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI) at the training academy. Gibson-Beltz noted the issues in training Case Managers due to being short staffed at DCS facilities.

SUB-COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Curriculum: Wittmuss stated the subcommittee has met twice since the last JBHC meeting. Dave Carver and Dennis McCargue were mentioned as possible members.

Wittmuss noted the subcommittee reviewed ACA standards, DCS curriculum, Work Ethic Camp (WEC) curriculum, and Jail Standards and training. Wittmuss requested clarification of the charge statement. She discussed how the subcommittee is operating with the understanding of where they originally started. This was confirmed by Barry, Griggs, and Gibson-Beltz.

Wittmuss requested clarification on who the focus should be on; adult, youth, or both. Terri Nutzman questioned how involved JBHC and the Council will become in reference to juveniles as the Council's focus is on adults only at this time. Griggs stated providers assume juveniles are also eligible for voucher treatment. Nutzman requested the Council incorporate juveniles as they will eventually be incarcerated in the adult correctional facilities. Krutz discussed the Council's view on juveniles and invited Nutzman to attend the next Council meeting. Nutzman reaffirmed her stance on aid for juveniles and acknowledged the Council's view.

Barry requested a standing agenda item for Nutzman and Griggs to provide reports to JBHC on juvenile issues.

Linda Wittmuss noted the subcommittee plans to structure the training guidelines equally for adult and youth. Wittmuss said she would prefer the first project focus on adult and then progress to youth. The subcommittee discussed the 'language' between the two different systems. Also discussed were establishing guidelines on how to demonstrate qualifications for providing this training. The subcommittee will coordinate with the professional licensing boards on the standards and guidelines on qualifications for training the trainers, and basic standards in areas of addictions.

The next Curriculum Subcommittee meeting will be held September 26, 2007.

Data: Wegner gave the update on the Data Subcommittee. He noted Probation has a data management/case management system, and have had trouble extracting, analyzing, and aggregating the data.

Wegner suggested merging or unifying the JBHC Data Subcommittee and the Council Uniform Data Committee since both committees deal with similar issues. Krutz will ask Chairperson Brashear if he would like to have this as an agenda item at the next Council meeting.

Mike Overton stated he would not like to see the two committees merge, but instead meet jointly and recognize there are common goals and try to reach the same objective. Overton noted the Uniform Data Committee is currently collecting data for Nebraska Probation Management Information System (NPMIS), SSAS, Presentence Investigation (PSI), Specialty Courts, and Fee Voucher Program.

The next Data Subcommittee meeting will be held November 17, 2007.

Provider: Nancy Probst gave an update on the Provider Subcommittee. Probst noted problems with the computerized voucher system, and getting vouchers to providers. She stated offenders have realized if they are currently on the voucher program they can request to get on the sliding fee scale and then obtain services for a cheaper price. Salvatore stated she has the ability to wave or lower the sliding fee scale. Salvatore noted the voucher committee is looking at condensing the minimum and maximum levels for the federal and regional sliding fee scales to adjust the income level of the offender.

The Evidence Based Practice Committee met October 23. Barry questioned whether they were researching evidence based practices or would they be advocating evidence based principles. Probst noted they are gathering new information from committee members which will then be prepared in a condensed form. The target is to report what evidence based principles are to JBHC.

The next Provider Subcommittee meeting will be held November 8, 2007.

PROVIDER FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

Barry revisited the issue of how to fund the mail out of the Provider Follow-Up Survey as probation has indicated they can not pay the cost. He noted the estimated number of providers to be surveyed is 500. Barry suggested a mass email with the responses being sent back to him.

Scott Carlson suggested the Zoomerang program which is an automated survey tool. Carlson noted it would be able to formulate the questions. The surveyed will check off answers, and Zoomerang would tabulate up the results. Wegner and Carlson will work together to find out the availability of Zoomerang and propose a target date for the mass email.

NEXT STEPS DISCUSSION

Barry discussed the next steps to be taken for the upcoming meeting. All Subcommittees will report their progress. The new standing report on juveniles from Griggs and Nutzman will be added. The discussion on the Mission, Vision, and Goals will be tabled until the next meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

Barry reminded committee members of the attendance requirement in the Guidelines. He suggested members appoint a designee if they are unable to attend meetings. Barry asked members to email Tia Bachman prior to being absent from a meeting.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

There was no Public Testimony at this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, December 12, at 9:30 a.m., at the Bryan LGH West Conference Room B in Lincoln, Nebraska.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tia M. Bachman